

Unit on Contaminants

Parma, 9 December 2012
EFSA/CONTAM/1880

SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD CHAIN
Minutes of the 56th plenary meeting of the Scientific Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain

Held on 20-22 November 2012, Parma

(Agreed on 8 1 2013)

Participants

- **Panel Members:**

Diane Benford, Sandra Ceccatelli,¹ Bruce Cottrill, Michael Dinovi², Eugenia Dogliotti, Lutz Edler, Peter Farmer, Peter Fürst, Ron Hoogenboom, Helle Knutsen, Manfred Metzler, Carlo Nebbia, Ivonne Rietjens, Hendrik van Loveren, Christiane Vleminckx and Pieter Wester

- **Hearing Expert:**

Alan Boobis (for item 5.5)² and Rolaf van Leeuwen (for item 5.3)

- **European Commission:**

Almut Bitterhof (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3) (for item 5.1 and 5.2)², Frank Swartenbroux (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3) (for item 5.3 and 5.5)² and Frans Verstraete (DG Health and Consumers, unit E3) (for item 5.4)².

- **EFSA:**

- **CONTAM Unit:**

Katleen Baert, Marco Binaglia, Bistra Benkova, Gina Cioacata, Carolina Di Bona, Mari Eskola, Valentina Mota, Silvia Inés Nicolau Solano, Luisa Ramos Bordajandi, Doina Stoica and Natalie Thatcher

- **DCM Unit:**

Petra Gergelova (for item 5.1), Fanny Heraud (for item 5.4) and Liisa Valsta (for item 5.2)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed the participants.

¹ Present on 21-22 November 2012 only.

² Present by tele-conference.

Apologies were received from Anne-Katrine Lundebye-Haldorsen (CONTAM Panel), Michael O'Keeffe (CONTAM Panel), Dieter Schrenk (CONTAM Panel), Vittorio Silano (CONTAM Panel), Lars Rylander (hearing expert for item 5.1) and Marina Marini (European Commission, DG Health and Consumers, unit 03)

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of interest

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes regarding Declarations of Interests (Dols)³ and the Decision of the Executive Director implementing this Policy⁴, EFSA screened the Annual Declaration of interest (ADoI) and the Specific Declaration of interest (SDoI) filled in by the experts invited for the present meeting. No conflicts of interests related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process or in the Oral Declaration of interest (ODoI) at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Agreement of the minutes of the 55th Plenary meeting held on 25-27 September 2012 in Parma

Agreed by written procedure.⁵

5. Scientific outputs submitted for discussion and possible adoption

5.1. Discussion and adoption of the draft opinion on mercury and methylmercury in food (EFSA-Q-2011-00923)

The chair of the CONTAM WG on Mercury in food presented the draft opinion on mercury and methylmercury in food (EFSA-Q-2011-00923), in which the European Commission had asked EFSA to assess the risk for public health related to the presence of mercury and methylmercury in food. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed her appreciation to the members of the WG on Mercury in food and EFSA staff for the preparatory work of this draft opinion.

5.2. Discussion on acrylamide in food

EFSA had received a joint letter from Technical University of Denmark, National Food Institute (DTU Food), French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES), National Food Safety Agency, Sweden (NFA Sweden) and Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany (BfR) presenting a suggestion for EFSA to consider new scientific findings related to the carcinogenic potential of acrylamide in food. The CONTAM Panel discussed the content of the joint letter. In addition to the letter, the CONTAM Panel

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencepolicy.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/independencerules.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/120925-m.pdf>

considered the recent report of the DCM unit on occurrence of acrylamide in food and the list of recent scientific papers on acrylamide compiled by the CONTAM Unit. In light of the provided information the CONTAM Panel concluded that the new evidence is sufficient to carry out a re-assessment on the risks for public health related to the presence of acrylamide in food. The CONTAM Panel agreed to initiate a new WG on acrylamide in food and Peter Farmer agreed to be the chair of this WG. The WG will start functioning when the practicalities in relation to the aforementioned decision of the CONTAM Panel on the re-assessment have been clarified.

5.3. Discussion and adoption of the draft guidance on methodological principles and scientific methods to be taken into account when establishing reference points for action (EFSA-Q-2011-00149)

The chair of the CONTAM WG on RPA presented the draft guidance on establishing reference points for action (EFSA-Q-2011-00149), in which the European Commission had asked EFSA to provide guidance on methodological principles and scientific methods to be taken into account when establishing reference points for action for non-allowed pharmacologically active substances present in food of animal origin. The CONTAM Panel discussed the draft guidance and noted that due to the nature of the approach taken advice from the EFSA Scientific Committee (SC) is needed. In addition, the CONTAM Panel proposed some clarifications to the terms of reference which were agreed with the European Commission in the plenary meeting. The CONTAM Panel decided to seek advice from the SC and therefore the draft guidance was not adopted in the meeting. A revised approach will be presented for discussion in the next CONTAM plenary meeting in January and then draft guidance will be presented for possible adoption in the first half of 2013.

5.4. Discussion and adoption of the draft opinion on the presence of dioxins and DL-PCBs in food for infants and young children (EFSA-Q-2011-01091)

The chair of the CONTAM WG on Dioxins in food for children presented the draft opinion on the presence of dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (DL-PCBs) in food for infants and young children (EFSA-Q-2011-01091), in which the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany (BfR) had asked EFSA to describe the relation of the occurrence data to the new EU maximum levels (MLs), and to assess whether these MLs are sufficient to aim to decrease the dietary exposure of infants and children to dioxins and DL-PCBs. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed her appreciation to the members of the WG on Dioxins in food for children and EFSA staff for the preparatory work of this draft opinion.

5.5. Discussion and adoption of the draft opinion on the evaluation of the substances currently on the list of the annex to Commission Directive 96/3/EC as acceptable previous cargoes for edible fats and oils – Part III of III (EFSA-Q-2010-01464)

The chair of the CONTAM WG on Previous cargoes re-evaluation presented the draft opinion on the re-evaluation of the substances in the Annex to Commission Directive 96/3/EC as acceptable previous cargoes (Part III of III) (EFSA-Q-2010-01464) highlighting the revisions introduced after the discussion of the draft opinion at the last CONTAM Panel meeting. The CONTAM Panel adopted this opinion subject to incorporation of minor changes as suggested during the meeting. The chair of the CONTAM Panel expressed her appreciation to the members of the WG on Previous cargoes re-evaluation and EFSA staff for the preparatory

work of this draft opinion. This was the last opinion of the series of the scientific opinions on the re-evaluation as previous cargoes of the substances in the Annex to Commission Directive 96/3/EC.

6. New mandates

No new official mandates falling within the mandate of the CONTAM Panel have been received by EFSA.

7. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/the Scientific Panel, Working Groups, EFSA and the European Commission

7.1. Scientific Committee and other Scientific Panels

The chair of the CONTAM Panel highlighted the draft agenda items to be discussed in the 58th plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) on 26-27 November 2012. The following items will be presented and discussed: the mandate on endocrine disruptors from the European Commission (EC), specialised courses on advanced aspects of risk assessment for EFSA's panels and staff, EC public consultation on the draft opinion "Addressing the new challenges for risk assessment" and Draft SC mandate on environmental risk assessment. The minutes of the 58th SC meeting will be made available on the EFSA website⁶.

7.2. CONTAM working groups

7.2.1. Working group on Alkaloids

The chair of the WG on Alkaloids informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the draft opinion on tropane alkaloids in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-01038) is progressing well and that it will be presented for possible adoption in the first half of 2013.

7.2.2. Working group on Aspergillus toxins

The chair of the WG on Aspergillus toxins informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the draft opinion on sterigmatocystin in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-01005) is progressing well and that it will be presented for possible adoption at the 57th CONTAM Panel meeting (22-24 January 2013).

7.2.3. Working group on Chromium and nickel

The chair of the WG on Chromium and nickel informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the WG will start working on the draft opinion on chromium in food (EFSA-Q-2012-00379) later in November 2012.

7.2.4. Working group on Dioxins in food for children

See agenda item 5.4.

⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/panels/sc.htm>

7.2.5. Working group on Fusarium toxins

The chair of the WG on Fusarium toxins informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the draft opinion on nivalenol in food and feed (EFSA-Q-2010-01003) is progressing well and that it will be presented for possible adoption in the first half of 2013.

7.2.6. Working group on Meat inspection – contaminants and the EFSA SCICO working group

A member of the WG on Meat inspection informed the members of the CONTAM Panel that the draft opinions on bovine meat inspection (EFSA-Q-2011-00111) and domestic sheep and goat meat inspection (small ruminants meat inspection) (EFSA-Q-2011-00960) will be presented for possible endorsement at the 57th CONTAM Panel meeting (22-24 January 2013). The remaining two draft opinions on domestic solipeds meat inspection (EFSA-Q-2011-00962) and on farmed game meat inspection (EFSA-Q-2011-00961) will be presented for possible endorsement at the 58th CONTAM Panel meeting (20-22 March 2012). In addition, the CONTAM Panel was updated on the main outcomes of the 1st SCICO WG meeting which took place on 22 October 2012.

7.2.7. Working group on Mercury and methylmercury in food

See agenda item 5.1.

7.2.8. Working group on Previous cargoes – re-evaluation

See agenda item 5.5.

7.2.9. Working group on Reference points for action

See agenda item 5.3.

7.3. EFSA

7.3.1. Advisory Forum

The Advisory Forum meeting will take place on 5-6 December 2012 in Paphos, Cyprus. Among the draft agenda items the following items will be presented and discussed: SC activity on endocrine disruptors, SC activity on guidance review, SC activity on uncertainty in risk assessment and SC activity on environmental risk assessment, current EFSA activities on chemical mixtures, systematic literature review activities of EFSA and the future aspects of the EFSA grants. The minutes of the Advisory Forum meeting will be made available on the EFSA website⁷.

7.3.2. Management Board

The Management Board meeting took place on 18 October 2012 in Parma. The management Board elected Sue Davis for the chair of the board and two vice chairs. At the meeting the external evaluation of EFSA carried out by Ernst & Young was presented and

⁷ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/121205.htm>

discussed, two new panel members were appointed to the Panel on Plant Protection Products and their Residues (PPR Panel), the amended list of the Art 36 organisations was adopted and an update on the EC impact study on fees was given. The minutes of the Management Board are available on the EFSA website⁸.

7.3.3. Other

The acting head of the CONTAM unit informed the members of the CONTAM Panel on the following matters:

EFSA's 10th Anniversary Scientific Conference on "Challenging boundaries in risk assessment – sharing experiences" was organised on 7-8 November 2012 in Parma. Over 600 participants attended the conference. The main outcome of the conference was the emphasis on fit-for-purpose risk assessments supported by the new technologies and better use of available data. In addition, the importance of the dialogue between risk assessors, risk managers and stakeholders was raised. More information is available on the EFSA website⁹.

On 12 November 2012 the inauguration of the new EFSA building took place. Representatives from EFSA Management Board, the European institutions and the Italian Government were present at this event. More information is available on the EFSA website¹⁰.

On 13 November 2012 EFSA and DG Sanco had a high level event in order to discuss "challenges of tomorrow". In this event EFSA's achievements were reviewed and the future challenges were discussed. More information is available on the EFSA website¹¹.

The new EFSA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be soon available on the EFSA website. These SOPs cover e.g. the adoption of the scientific outputs, establishing, updating and closing of the WGs and documentation on the scientific risk assessment processes. The SOPs are also obligatory for the CONTAM Panel members to follow.

Bistra Benkova started as an in-service trainee in the CONTAM Unit on 1 November 2012 for a duration of one year.

The achievements of the CONTAM Panel since its inauguration in July 2012 were presented. In total three CONTAM Panel meetings were held and four scientific opinions were adopted. An outline on the future work programme was also given. The members of the CONTAM Panel were thanked for their valuable work during the past months and seasonal greetings were expressed. In addition, the chair of the CONTAM Panel thanked the Panel members for their contributions during the half a year and looked forward to meet the new challenges in 2013.

7.4. European Commission

This agenda item was deferred to the 57th CONTAM Panel meeting (22-24 January 2013) due to lack of time.

⁸ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/doc/121018-m.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/121116b.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/121112.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/121113.htm>

8. Other scientific topics for information

8.1. Training for the EFSA Panel members and staff

EFSA will organise in collaboration with Karolinska Institutet (KI) specialised courses on advanced aspects of risk assessment for EFSA panel members and staff in 2013-2015. The courses are the following: course on evidence base for risk assessment, course on variability and uncertainty and course on exposure assessment. The registration for these courses is through KI web site¹². The CONTAM Panel members are asked to notify the CONTAM Unit on the application.

8.2. Present status of current outsourcing activities of the CONTAM Unit

The Article 36 grant for a study on the influence of food processing on nitrate levels in vegetables was signed with the University of Maribor, Slovenia in August 2012 for one year. The kick-off meeting was held in September 2012. A first interim report will be delivered by the beneficiary in January 2013.

The procurement on a combined toxicokinetic and *in vivo* genotoxicity study on *Alternaria* toxins was signed with the Fraunhofer Institute, Germany, in August 2012 for two years. The kick-off meeting was held in September 2012.

For the procurement to collate the literature on oral toxicity data on chromium and nickel the kick-off meeting was held in September 2012. The first interim report on chromium will be delivered by the beneficiary in February 2013. The final report on nickel will be delivered by June 2013.

For the procurement on an extensive literature search and provision of summaries of the studies on oral toxicity of perfluoroalkylated substances, their precursors and potential replacements in experimental animals and humans, the evaluation of the received offers is in progress.

9. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

¹² <http://ki.se/ki/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=43955&l=en>